



Teaching and Learning Policy

Written by The Staff of Durand

February 2009

Agreed November 2009

Revised and agreed June 2015

Reviewed March 2017

Durand Primary School

Teaching and Learning Policy

Rationale

Teaching and Learning are at the centre of school life. Teaching is the means by which we offer, and put into practice, a curriculum which is broad and balanced, meeting the requirements of the Curriculum 2008 and Foundation Phase documents, Religious Education Framework, Literacy and Numeracy Framework and Personal, Social and Education. The policy outlines the good practice expected of all teachers and staff and should enable individuals to reflect upon their own strategies and style of teaching. It will also influence the way the curriculum is taught and ensure that our pupils experience a consistent approach throughout the school. This policy aims to ensure that the children at our school are provided with high quality learning experiences that lead to a consistently high level of pupil achievement.

WAG's (2008) vision is that all young people should have 'the opportunity to reach their full potential'. NC 2008 and the 2013 LNF will provide opportunities, challenges and aims to be up-to-date and motivating for all learners.

Introduction

At Durand Primary School we believe in the concept of lifelong learning, and in the idea that both adults and children learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone; in short, it should be fun. Through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

Our School Motto is '**Learning Together, Achieving Together**'.

Aims

We believe that individuals learn best in different ways. At our school we provide a rich and varied learning environment that allows all children to develop their skills and abilities to their full potential and beyond.

Through our teaching we aim to:

- enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners;
- foster children's self-esteem, and help them to build positive relationships with other people;
- develop children's self-respect, encourage them to understand the ideas, attitudes and values of others, and teach them to respect other people's feelings;
- show respect for a diverse range of cultures and, in so doing, to promote positive attitudes towards other people;
- enable children to understand their community, and help them feel valued as part of it;
- help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.

Effective Learning and Teaching

We know that people learn in many different ways, and respond best to different types of input. We therefore deliver teaching in different ways to address the needs of all our learners. We ensure the best possible environment for learning by developing a positive atmosphere where pupils feel safe and feel they belong, where they enjoy being challenged, but where they enjoy learning, and know that they will succeed.

We encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, to be involved as far as possible in reviewing the way they learn, and to reflect on how they learn – what helps them learn, and what makes it difficult for them to learn.

When we are teaching we focus on motivating all the children, and building on their skills, knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, so that they reach the highest level of personal achievement.

Teachers make ongoing assessments of each child's progress, and they use this information when planning their lessons. It enables them to take into account the abilities of all their children. Our prime focus is to develop further the skills and knowledge of all our children. We strive to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to each child's level of ability. When planning work for children with special educational needs, we give due regard to information and targets contained in the children's Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Teachers modify teaching and learning as appropriate for children with disabilities. We value each child as a unique individual, and teachers are familiar with the relevant equal opportunities legislation covering race, gender and disability. We will strive to meet the needs of all our children, and to ensure that we meet all statutory requirements related to matters of inclusion.

Effective Teaching and Learning Principles

- Equips learners for life in its broadest sense.
- Engages with valued forms of knowledge.
- Recognises the importance of prior experience and learning. Requires the teacher to scaffold learning.
- Needs assessment to be congruent with learning.
- Promotes the active engagement of the learner.
- Recognises young children learn best through play.
- Fosters both individual and social processes and outcomes.
- Recognises the significance of informal learning.
- Depends on teacher learning.
- Demands consistent policy frameworks with support for teaching and learning as their primary focus.

Our school is a place of learning where all should have the opportunity to develop their skills and talents, to fulfil their potential and achieve excellence, irrespective of ability, disability, social background, culture or gender. We aim to produce learners who are motivated and effective, increasingly more responsible for their own learning, able to make use of the new technologies and those who will be able to learn and apply new skills effectively throughout their lives, whether in school, the workplace or at home. ALL staff are dedicated to the nurturing and development of ALL children. We are passionate about teaching the skills, attitudes and values that will enable them to live healthy, happy and fulfilling lives, now, and in the future. Everything we do must work for our children and their learning!

Learning and teaching are processes of co-operative teamwork and the involvement of parents, governors and others in the community is welcomed and encouraged.

We believe that children learn best when they:

- Are happy, feel valued, respected and cared for.
- Are engaged, appropriately challenged, stimulated and extended.
- Acquire new knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes, develop ideas and increase their understanding.
- Are motivated to work to the best of their ability.
- Show interest in their learning and sustain concentration.
- Make good progress, achieve success and gain approval.
- Develop independent learning strategies.
- Understand what they are doing, how well they have done and how they can improve.
- Are given tasks which match or extend their ability.
- Are confident, feel secure and are aware of expectations.

All pupils are entitled to:

- Teaching of good quality.
- Feedback on their progress.
- Clear targets for improvement.
- Advice and support.

In our teaching we enable children to:

- Develop lively, enquiring minds to question and discuss rationally.
- Acquire knowledge and skills relevant to adult life.
- Be responsible for their own actions.
- Be aware of their effect on others.
- Respect the rights of others as being equal to their own.
- Understand and respect religious, moral and ethical values.

For teaching and learning to be successful and motivating for teachers and learners alike, it should promote:

- A focus on developing learning rather than merely transferring information and facts.
- Collaborative learning where learners learn from each other in pairs and small groups. RWI is a strong example of this.
- Active and interactive learning – use of resources such as whiteboards that allow all pupils to participate.
- Develop thinking, especially questioning, planning, problem solving, creative and critical thinking skills.
- Determining success criteria so that learners are aware of what they can do, what they need to do to improve and how to do it.
- Reflection of what has been learned and how the learning has occurred.
- Assessment for learning strategies that focus on next steps.

Improved classroom practice will enable learners to:

- Think for themselves.
- Improve the quality of their speaking and listening.
- Develop bilingual skills and the ability to work in two languages.
- Gain a deeper understanding of topics.
- Be more critical of evidence.

- Make reasoned judgements and decisions rather than jumping to conclusions.
- Understand and hasten their progress.
- Achieve better quality outcomes.
- Take greater responsibility for their learning.
- Develop increased self-confidence.
- Engage in self-assessment and peer assessment.
- Be better prepared for the challenges of school and the wider world.

Effective Teaching and Learning

We recognise that teaching is most effective when teachers:

- Demonstrate and model good knowledge skills and understanding when presenting and delivering sessions/topics.
- Challenge and inspire pupils.
- Use methods, approaches and styles which enable all pupils to learn effectively.
- Manage pupils well and secure high standards of behaviour.
- Use time, support staff and other resources effectively.
- Assess pupils' learning thoroughly and use assessments to help and develop pupils' progress.
- Target setting with pupils.
- Use assessment evidence to plan effectively, setting appropriate objectives that pupils understand and share success criteria.
- Use home/school liaison effectively to reinforce and/or extend what is learnt in school.

All teachers are entitled to:-

- Regular evaluation of their work.
- Feedback on their effectiveness.
- Professional development opportunities which support their continuing effectiveness and the needs of the school and the community

Teachers need to arrange time to observe, assess, reflect and review achievements with each child on a regular basis. The child should be involved in this process by the encouragement of self-appraisal, target setting. Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

Our Learning Environment

Our classrooms are attractive learning environments. Our displays reflect the topics studied by the children. We ensure that all children have the opportunity to display their best work at some time during the year. All classrooms have a range of dictionaries and of both fiction and non-fiction books. We also use displays as learning prompts for the children. We believe that a stimulating environment sets the climate for learning, and that an exciting classroom promotes independent use of resources, which results in high-quality work by the children.

Because children learn best when they feel happy, secure, confident & valued. There will be evidence in the classroom of:

- A familiar routine.
- Praise and respect for others and our environment.
- Talking and listening to adults and each other.
- Increasing independence and responsibility.
- Enthusiastic, creative and self-motivated pupils learning.

- A caring attitude.
- Tasks they can succeed in.
- Positive attitudes towards taking risks in their learning.

Because children learn best when their surroundings are lively & interesting. There will be evidence in the classroom of:

- Stimulating displays reflecting a range of curriculum areas.
- Children's work being valued and celebrated.
- Inter-active display.
- Development of imaginative play.
- Wide variety of activities extension tasks, practical maths resources.
- Giving time to talk about their own interests.
- Well-resourced reading area.

Because children learn best when they have access to a range of appropriate resources. There will be evidence in the classroom of:

- Organisation so that children know where things are.
- Labelling appropriate to age group.
- Clearly marked and accessible learning areas.
- Children taking responsibility for the care of all resources.
- Allowance for experimentation in a safe and controlled way.
- Ease of access to frequently used resources.

Because children learn best when they have entitlement to the full range of the curriculum irrespective of ability or disability, social background, culture or gender. There will be evidence in the classroom of:

- Teaching adapted for multi-sensory learning (VAK).
- Challenge for more able children.
- Appropriate support for less able children.
- Effective use of teaching assistants to support children.
- Resources which reflect a variety of cultures, beliefs and religions.
- Opportunities and resources which challenge gender, racial and cultural stereotypes.

Because children learn best when they have time to reflect and talk about their experiences. There will be evidence in the classroom of:

- Time for relevant talk and discussion, self and peer assessment.
- Talk being valued, through children and adults listening and responding to each other.
- Children discussing and completing tasks in pairs and groups.
- Development of active listening skills.
- Opportunities for reflection and concentration.

Because children learn best when they are making progress and are able to celebrate their achievements. There will be evidence in the classroom of:

- Praise and encouragement.
- Systems of reward.
- Children's work displayed with care.
- Analysis of work with teacher.
- Children's assessment of their work and setting of own learning targets.
- Shared reading stories across years.
- Sharing work with other teachers and children.

Because children learn best when they have opportunities for practical, relevant exploration of ideas. There will be evidence in the classroom of:

- Investigations.
- Problem solving.
- Opportunities for practical activities reflected across the curriculum.
- A variety of teaching and learning strategies.

Because children learn best when they are able to work collaboratively as well as independently. There will be evidence in the classroom of:

- Individual and collaborative work time allowed for children to consolidate and extend own learning.
- Flexible groupings related to the task in hand – mixed, ability, peer grouping, preferred learning style.
- Child led learning in Foundation Phase.

Because children learn best when they know what is expected of them. There will be evidence in the classroom of:

- Clear instructions and focused learning and skills targets.
- Teachers checking children's understanding.
- The school's expectations and consequences clearly displayed in a way relevant to their age and level of understanding.
- Boundaries for behaviour.
- High expectations.

Because children learn best when work is matched to their individual needs. There will be evidence in the classroom of:

- Work planned for different abilities and learning styles.
- Support for identified children.
- Continuous assessment.
- A range of appropriate resources.
- Accessible learning areas which reflect a range of abilities.
- Children working on task.
- Children feeling secure, confident and valued.
- Questions which help children consolidate and extend thinking.

Because children learn best when learning is relevant to their lives in the wider community. There will be evidence of:

- Visitors representing different sectors of the community – local and wider community.
- Visits to places outside and within the local community.
- Topic work related to global issues.

Evaluating our effectiveness

We recognise that teaching should always be evaluated in terms of its impact on pupils' learning and what makes it successful. Learning should be evaluated as effective when it secures good progress for all pupils.

All our teachers reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, and plan their professional development accordingly. We do all we can to support our teachers in developing their skills, so that they can continually improve their practice.

Teaching and Learning can be evaluated through:-

- Identifying the sharing of good practice within school.
- Monitoring the range of teaching and learning activities.
- Review and updating of teaching and learning training.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of any training undertaken.
- Planning.
- Assessment records and evidence.
- Classroom observation.
- Work Sampling
- Learning walks.
- Observing pupils at play.
- Assessment for learning strategies.
- Self and peer assessment.
- Data analysis.
- Moderated work.
- Staff and pupil interviews/questionnaires.
- Parent consultations.

We make effective use of the Excellence in Teaching Framework to support our evaluations of lessons, identification of good practice, and monitoring of progress and standards.

The Role of Governors

Our governors support, monitor and review the school policies on Teaching and Learning. In particular they:

- support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively;
- ensure that the school buildings and premises are best used to support successful teaching and learning;
- monitor teaching strategies in the light of health and safety regulations;
- monitor how effective teaching and learning strategies are in terms of raising pupil attainment;
- ensure that staff development and performance management policies promote good quality teaching;
- monitor the effectiveness of the school's teaching and learning policies through the school self-review processes. These include reports/presentations from subject spokespersons, headteacher's reports to governors as well as a review of the in-service training sessions attended by our staff.
- a link Governor has been assigned to each curriculum area.

The Role of parents

We believe that parents have a fundamental role to play in helping children to learn.

We do all we can to inform parents about what and how their children are learning by:

- holding parents' evenings twice yearly to discuss pupils' progress;
- sending information to parents, at the start of each term, which outlines the topics that the children will be studying during that term at school;
- sending parents an annual report in which we explain the progress made by each child, and indicate how the child can improve further;

- explaining to parents how they can support their children with homework, and suggesting, for example, regular shared reading with very young children, and support for older children with their projects and investigative work.

We believe that parents have the responsibility to support their children and the school in implementing school policies. We encourage parents to:

- ensure that their child has the best attendance record possible;
- ensure that their child is equipped for school with the correct uniform and PE kit;
- do their best to keep their child clean, healthy and fit to attend school;
- inform school if there are matters outside of school that are likely to affect a child's performance or behaviour;
- promote a positive attitude towards school and learning in general;
- fulfil the requirements set out in the home-school agreement.

Monitoring and review

We are aware of the need to monitor the school's teaching and learning policy, and to review it regularly, so that we can take account of new initiatives and research, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school. We will therefore review this policy every two years, or earlier if necessary.

Headteacher:

Chair of Governors:

Date:

APPENDIX 1:

The Quality of Learning and Teaching.

- Do pupils achieve appropriate standards in their learning?
- Are appropriate learning targets and goals negotiated and achieved?
- Are pupils actively and effectively involved in setting their own targets?
- Do all pupils succeed regardless of their social ethnic or linguistic background?
- Do pupils build effectively on previous learning?
- Do all pupils develop their skills so that they can progress to the next stage of learning?
- Do pupils show motivation, stay on task and make effective use of their time?
- Do pupils behave responsibly and show respect for others?
- Do pupils show the capacity to work independently?
- Do pupils show an awareness of and respect for other cultures?
- Do teachers ensure that the work is challenging and creates interest?
- Are opportunities provided across the curriculum for problem solving?
- Do teachers establish good working relationships that foster learning?
- Do teachers have a secure subject knowledge and understanding of recent developments?
- Does planning set appropriate expectations and convey clear objectives?
- Do teachers employ a range of teaching techniques, styles and questioning strategies?
- Are there opportunities for class, group and pair work?
- Is the class managed effectively?
- Are learning environments stimulating?
- Is pupils' work valued and celebrated?
- Are resources (physical & human) adequate and accessible?
- Do teachers promote equality of opportunity?
- Do teachers meet the language needs of all learners?
- Are the needs of individual learners appropriately met?
- Is progress monitored and reviewed?
- Are learners' achievements and progress systematically assessed and recorded?
- Do learners understand the purpose of assessment?
- Are they involved in evaluating and planning their own progress and improvement?